CDXC Newsletter

April 1991 Chiltern DX Club Issue 72

Editorial/Chairman's Comments

Hello again. Haven't the bands been fabulous? Just as I was thinking this sunspot cycle was on the decline we have been treated to some excellent propagation on the high bands. A couple of nights ago I was listening to JA, VK and ZL stations on 10 metres at midnight, and in the mornings there have been openings to KH6, VK, ZL, KL7, VE7 and W7. I cannot ever recall morning openings to W7 on ten, though I suppose it must have happened before. I was also fortunate enough to hear KG6DX on six metres, though I couldn't crack the pile-up. Let's hope all this is a good omen for the coming months.

Although there will be a newsletter out in time for the Annual Review Meeting, those who are unable to attend will not see it until later, at which time there will be a new Committee, so this is probably a good time to review the year gone by. Just as Ian, G4LJF, relates elsewhere in this newsletter, like him I have a host of non-CDXC activities with which I am involved, so it is not always possible to devote as much time to CDXC affairs as I might wish. Indeed, the load has got to the point where I really will have to off-load CDXC responsibilities at the A.R.M. after editing the newsletter for much of the past 4 or 5 years (I'm losing track!), as well as my year as Chairman. Just to gain your sympathy (or not!), I am on the RSGB HF Committee, write for Ham Radio Magazine, help produce an occasional Topband newsletter, do IOTA checking and maintain the IOTA database, have been taking a sailing course (Good way of getting to islands!), am into the third year of an Open University MBA course, do a bit of DXing and contesting when I have time, give a number of talks to radio clubs, handle the GJ6UW GU6UW and GP6UW QSL cards, am a corresponding member of the RSGB Datacomms Committee, commute daily to London so am out of the house for 12 hours a day and, last but by no means least, like

Contents

Editorial/Chairman	1
Secretary's Notepad	3
From the President	4
Bob Hearn, G0BTY	7
CDXC DXpedition	12
The CY9CF Story	14
Contest News	20

to spend time with the xyl and our two young children! The time has come when I will have to be ruthless and drop some of these activities, and I'm afraid that will have to include CDXC responsibilities, having done my bit in recent years. It is as a result of all the above plus a particularly demanding period at the saltmine that this issue of the newsletter will be rather late hitting the streets, for which please accept my apologies.

What I have tried to do with CDXC during the year is to get it established on a better footing to expand its activities. Our membership continues to grow, to the point where the Committee has had to consider ways of improving the administration to cope. Our finances end the year in a healthy state, and a good future income stream is in prospect. The newsletter has grown, and the Cluster system has become well established. Not that CDXC can claim all the credit for Cluster, which is now in good hands with the UK Cluster Working Group, but we did a lot to get the system off the ground in the UK. We now have an awards programme, both merit and contest awards, of which we can be proud, with good quality plaques. We continue to support worthwhile DXpedition activities, and are about to supply VQ9AY with QSL cards. CDXC sweat shirts will, all being well, be unveiled at the ARM. Our social events programme has continued, with local get-togethers, the Christmas Dinner, etc. CDXC members played a major part in last year's HF Convention. Many DX stations remark on the high quality colour QSLs they receive from CDXC members. New members should now receive a full membership pack on joining, containing details of membership services, etc. The G3WGV contest log software is selling well under the auspices of CDXC and making a valuable contribution to Club funds.

All in all, I believe CDXC has tremendous potential. During the year I have come inreasingly to realise, as I'm sure my predecessors did, that the main limit to what CDXC can do is the willingness of members to devote time to CDXC activities. Volunteers for any Club project or post are few and far between. This isn't intended as a

(cont'd on p.18)

CDXC Committee

President	G4LJF
(Tel: 0860 663296)	
Chairman	G3XTT
(Tel: 0734 724192)	
Vice-Chairman	G0HSD
(Tel: 08444 4762)	
Secretary	G3LQP
(Tel: 081 642 4956)	
Treasurer	G4GED
(Tel: 081 578 4484)	

Other Officers:

Awards Manager	G4GED
Social Secretary	G0HSD

Deadline for next newsletter: 11th May 1991

Secretary's Notepad

As I prepare this Notepad on St. Patrick's Day, one thinks perhaps of the luck of the Irish, but it's a memorable day for me because my QSO this morning with ZL3QN was number 2000.

As many members know, I have a regular sked with him most mornings, and the 2000 QSOs which I have now had include contacts from G GW VQ9 VE6 and W5 which make it a little unusual to say the least. Fred and his XYL Sue visited Beryl and I in June 1989, and during the next 18 months we hope to visit them in ZL. Beryl is especially looking forward to the visit, as she lived in New Zealand for nearly 5 years.

On to less pleasant matters. I have to record the sad loss of Bob, G0BTY, under very tragic circumstances. CDXC was represented at the funeral, and a donation was given as requested by Bob's widow. Bob, although not perhaps known by many members, contributed positively to the cause of DXing, being Ian G4LJF's QSL manager for SWL reports on Ian's DXpeditions, and through Bob's information on 525 I worked Jim Smith in T33 LP on 15 one evening.

A warm welcome to new members J.St.Leger G3VDL (ex-MP4BBE), Bob Rylett, G3VXJ, Robert Dunne, G0MGM, Bob carpenter, G4BAH, Don, G3FKH, and Ron G6LX, as well as to rejoining members Ray, G0AEQ, and John, G3BRD. Also, please note that Dave, G4FRE/WG3I now has a new QTH. I hope all new members will enjoy our company for many years to come.

Yes Folks, it's notification time for the Annual Review Meeting. This will take place at 1430 (local time) on Sunday 19th May 1991 at the QTH of our Chairman G3XTT. Nominations for the Committee posts should be with me by 1st May. Many of the present officers have served for a number of years and would like to retire gracefully, so come on, don't be shy, and put something back into our wonderful hobby.

CDXC is in possession of the RSGB Video "Amateur Radio for Beginners". Although it is not directly connected with DXing, I found the 40 minute presentation interesting. If any member wishes to borrow it they are most welcome. Please contact yours truly.

Now on to another matter which I know the Chairman will also mention in this newsletter. This concerns remarks made by CDXC members on the Cluster system from time to time, esepcially most recently about lists and nets. I think some of the comments have been OTT (over the top). I am not saying you should not express opinions from time to time, but there is a time and place for everything and

(cont'd on p.19)

From the President - Ian Shepherd, G4LJF

As President of CDXC I thought it appropriate to sum up the past year as this will be the last News Letter before the ARM.

I do apologise for not writing more this year, but it has just been one of those years with too much going on!

The year started with the second rebuild of my tower after the January gales got it again. By mid year I was back on the air, but time was heavily taken up with Cluster development.

The HF Convention was a successful event for the Club, and the talks by Don and myself sparked much interest in computer use with Ham Radio, and spurred many on to join the Cluster.

After the convention, I made my pilgrimage to Tortola in the British Virgin Islands to take part in the Interline Regatta, which meant spending a lot of time in the sun on a 44 foot yacht drinking far too much rum! I actually put on 10 lbs weight during the fortnight!

I came home full of spirits (groan), to find that my Westower bent double again with most of the antennas once more wrecked! I had wound the tower about half way down rather than fully when I went away, so as to give as much coverage as possible to Cluster users, but alas a freak storm was too much for the top section which folded like plasticine!

Utter despair. All the benefits of the holiday seemed to disappear like water out of the bath tub! I was very close to throwing in the towel. Three tower collapses in just under three years. Was it all worth it? Well I guess being two under Honour Roll made up my mind for me. By January I had new antenna parts from the States and a reinforced top section from Western, and with help from BXQ WGV and VIE, LJF was QRV again by mid January.

Much of my time has also been taken up by learning to fly two new types of aircraft. an Airwave Magic 6 Hang Glider, and more recently the Boeing 747 400 series. Each is beautiful in its own right.

The peace and tranquillity of soaring thousands of feet above the country side is an experience that is hard to describe. It's a freedom that only the birds know..utterly marvellous, even if it is punctuated with more than the occasional moment of sheer terror!

The new Jumbo with its turned up wing tips is the forefront of aviation technology. My working environment with large coloured computer screens to help my aging eyes, comfortable sheepskin covered seats, and much improved bunks, is a joy to fly. The additional power from the new Rolls engines has to be felt to be believed. Thank you both Airwave and Boeing for enriching my life.

I have also been busy gaining my Yacht Master ticket, and am now embarking on the Ocean Yachtmaster which means being able to

navigate by the sextant. This is all in preparation for my retirement ambition to circum navigate the Earth by yacht, with of course, an Ham set or two on board! So you see, there really has not been to much time to write this year!

It has again been a super year for Dx. The long time inactive countries seem to be tumbling off the top of the list, and despite missing KH5 and S2 last April through being away, my current score has shot up to 316. The year has also seen several G0's get to Honour Roll. A very fine effort. One wonders whether the Cluster would have made any difference. It will be interesting to see how newcomers fair against the clock in future years. To be fair though, we had our own human Cluster here in the Thames Valley for many years....Bill G3MCS!

The Club has been well managed under the Chairmanship of Don G3XTT and the Committee during the last year, and has taken on a smarter image with a very well produced prospectus and application form, distinctive Club Badges, full colour QSL cards and Club sweatshirts now about to be offered.

Membership has grown, and we now have most of the UK's leading DX'ers within the Club, together with many newly licensed Amateurs who will no doubt be the leaders of the future. Long may Dx and the evolution continue.

I would like to end by thanking Don and his Committee for all the hard work that they have put in over the year, and wish all of you, especially those who will take office in the next year, a very happy and successful future.

73 and enjoy the Dx whilst it lasts

de Ian G4LJF

CLUSTER NEWS

The number of users and the Network continues to grow. Welcome to Keith G3VKW's Cluster at Ansty Sussex GB7DXS. Simon G1FHY will be opening a Cluster in Paddington as soon as the next release of the software is released in April. This will take some of the load off DXI, which actually filled up last weekend, and users had to wait till someone disconnected before they could get in!

Bob G3PJT in Cambridge would also like to get a Cluster going, so if you live in that area, please contact him and lend support V:F7 and encouragement. It needs both to get a system up and running. His works number is 071-354-9942.

The eight Clusters seem to holding together quite well now. At DXI we now have a 23 cms link to DXH, and we hope to get the 23 cms link through to DXC in Cheltenham which links to WDX, BPQ, and YDX. DXS hopes to link to DXH son on 23 cms, and Chris G4HCL is making huge efforts to get SMC more reliably

linked in to the network.

At DXI I have upgraded the XT to a 16 Mhz AT, which seems to have got rid of the unreliability problems, as well as speeding things up a lot. When I get an AT hard disk controller, then it should really fly!

John G4PDQ had created some useful databases, SPOTS and ACCESS. a SH/SPOTS {Call Sign} will report how many Dx spots were put out by that station, band by band too, together with the percentage contribution to the network as a whole. A SHOW/SPOTS TOP3 will report back the top 3 spotters! (No time for us sysops to get to that position I am afraid!). Top of the pops at the moment are GW3NYY, G4VXE and G3MCS in that order! You are slipping Bill hi!

Maurice G3XKD is hard at work at producing a Cluster News Letter Called The Cluster Duster. Four quarterly issues will cost you £3 and any profits will be channelled into the UK Cluster Group fund which will in turn be ploughed back into the network. I you wish to contribute more..then please feel free, but remember it is UKCG Policy for users to support their own Sysop first. Any surplus in the UKCG fund is for helping out with unforeseen emergencies such as equipment failure etc.

Keith G3VKW and Nigel G1TDM have also commissioned a database called MODS, which contains a host of modifications to rigs to make them work or work better on packet. A SH/MODS TS940S for example would give you the gen on the 940. SH/MODS INDEX will list the radios for which data is available. John Wiseman G8BPQ has modified his Node Switch software to be compatible with the Cluster software, and most of the network is now set up as BPQ Nodes. This provides wider and more efficient connections by users, and also incorporates an "invisible timer" so users no longer get their screens full of auto timer messages.

There is no doubt that Cluster has been firmly established in the UK. It now works better than well, and its handling of mail puts the BBS system to shame. This is largely because about 70% of the BBS traffic is long bulletins addressed to all rather than personal mail.

In order to preserve the integrity of our network, I would ask that we all keep mail brief and to the point. We have to share the UK Network with the links used by the NTS, and it is true to say that we have come in for some criticism from those who see our 3 - 4% of channel occupancy as a scape goat for shortcomings in a network that is trying to handle too much traffic, much of which seems to be of little value, or sent to too far widespread an area.

Finally congratulations to you all for setting a new all time record for stations connected to the Cluster Network at one time ... 68! I wonder if we shall see 100 later this year?

Good Hunting de Ian, G4LJF, Sysop GB7DXI

Bob Hearn, G0BTY

As many of you will have read in the press, CDXC Bob Hearn G0BTY sadly ended his life last Wednesday evening in a very distressing manner for the many Amateurs who tried very hard in vain to find him before it was too late. Bob leaves a wife and three children.

Bob had been a paid up member of CDXC for several years past, despite financial difficulties. His interest was mainly in RTTY Dx'ing, though he frequently maintained links with his RN background by operating from HMS Belfast.

He was also my SWL QSL Manager, and did a superb job of dealing with the many cards that I receive. He was also one of the organisers of the Mc Michael Rally held at Burnham each year.

Bob was also frequently to be heard on the West London repeater as due to his poor VHF QTH in the High Wycombe valley, he could not maintain VHF contact with CDXC Members on 144.525 direct.

Bob was certainly a character, and will be sorely missed by the many who got to know him. True to his devotion to Amateur Radio, he was QRV till he could speak no more as the exhaust fumes from his car overcame him.

Bob was cremated at Amersham Crematorium on Friday 8th March. The funeral was well attended by the various radio clubs that Bob belonged to, with G3COJ and I representing CDXC.

The church was filled, including the gallery, and so Bob had a fine send off from his friends.

As Bob's family were left in a very difficult financial position, an appeal for help was launched through the West London repeater and through the Cluster. I am pleased to say that over £500 was raised, and a special account has been raised to help the family and children with their needs.

I had a letter from Bob's eldest son Chris today, expressing a very sincere thank you to those of you so kindly helped them out.

May you find peace Bob now that your troubles are over.

Ian G4LJF

From Phil, G3SWH

I guess CDXC members will have read about my planned expedition to UI8 with Barry, G3LZK. Here are a few notes to bring CDXC up to date, although events are tending to happen quite fast now. We've finally received the "official" invitation from UI8AA, with whom we're going to stay, and this has been sent off to the Soviet Embassy in London with the passports, etc, for the necessary visas to be granted. Subject to receipt of the visas, and they could take a further three weeks to process, we are planning to fly London/Moscow/Tashkent on 3rd May, returning on 11th May. This will give us 4th to 10th in Uzbekistan. We're still awaiting official news about the radio licences. The last I heard from Box 88 in Moscow was that they were still waiting for a letter from UI8AA confirming that he had invited us and giving his permission for us to use his station(s). I sent a long FAX to UA3AF, Nick Kazansky, who is Vice-President of the Central Radio Club, on Tuesday last (12th), but as yet have had no reply. It takes up to a month to get a letter to Moscow or Tashkent, and then another month to get the reply back, even if they answer it the same day. The waiting is the most frustrating part!

However, I'm hopeful. I don't think we'll be issued with our own callsigns, but UI8AA is the chief operator for "club" stations UI9AWD, UI9AWI and UI9BWR, so I guess we'll use one or more of these calls as "guest" operators. Some of these stations are quite well equipped, so I don't think that there will be a problem getting on the air.

We shall almost certainly be exclusively CW andf looking for CDXC, FOC and RNARS members, although all comers will be welcome. For these reasons we shall most probably operate on or around +025 or +052 plus or minus QRM. QSLs will be handled jointly and can be sent to either G3LZK or myself, QTHR any callbook. We hope to operate both 160 and the WARC bands, but don't at this stage know what sort of equipment will be available.

73's, etc de Phil

From Tony, G4ZYQ

Tony, G4ZYQ is compiling a "Most Wanted Countries List" for U.K. DXers, and our thanks to the guys who have already entered their needed countries on the GB7YDX NEEDS database. We have about 12 lists so far, but need a whole lot more to make the excercise worthwhile.

Could you take a few minutes out to compile a list of your needed countries and send them to G4ZYQ on the PacketCluster system, or to G4ZYQ @ GB7NWP on the BBS network ?

If you need more than fifty countries, please list what you con-

sider to be the most needed. The prefixes are all that is required e.g. 3B6, A5, C2, etc. Where a prefix constitutes more than one country, such as VP8 and 3Y, just add something like /G after the VP8 (VP8/G) for South Georgia, or /SA (VP8/SA) for South Sandwich.

Once compiled, the list will be transmitted on the U.K. PacketCluster Network and the BBS Network.

From Andrew, G0HSD

Hi Everyone,

I had an idea the other day. Why don't CDXC have a DX DAY. The object being CDXC members working as much DX as they can in a, say, 24hrs, without calling CQ, nets etc. A purely 'Winkle 'em out' session.

This I think would become a popular event and add a little competion within the club. This I think would also answer the argument about CDXC being very 'Contest' (CQ, WPX etc...) orientated. This would be a chance for DXers to show their metal in the aspect of radio without CDXC would not exist....DXing.

What do think?

Also, Steve, GW4BLE, has kindly responded to the request for "Members' Help" volunteers. Steve has offered to supply contest log and cover sheets to members. He has sheets for all the major contests: CQ, AA, RSGB, ARRL, JA, WPX, etc. In return for an sae he will provide ONE log and ONE cover sheet for whichever contest the members requires.

73 de Andrew

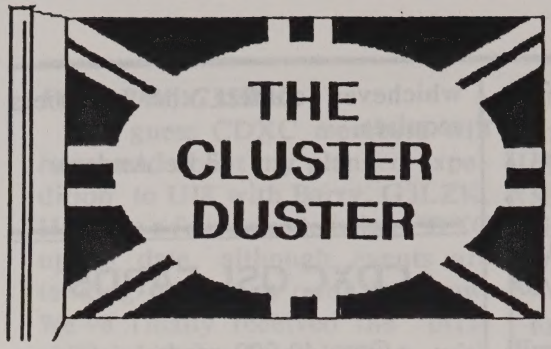
CDXC QSL CARDS

Over 40,000 cards have been delivered to Club Members so far, and reports are very favourable. If you would like to obtain some of these cards in full colour at a price of around half the best UK price, then drop an SASE to Roger Brown G3LQP, 32 Albert Road, Sutton, Surrey and you will get a sample card and order form by return. We obtained the very good price on a basis of buying 50,000 cards, so it would help if some more were ordered.

QSL MADNESS!

The RSGB QSL Buro recently received a letter from a very recently licensed N2 asking for details of the buro - whether he should send envelopes, how QSL Managers operated, etc. Theory is that he probably knows ZILCH about QSLing and, as he said he got the address from the Callbook - probably believes he has to lodge envelopes with every buro in the world!!!!

(Tnx G4DYO)



THE NEWSLETTER

OF THE

UK CLUSTER

WORKING GROUP

THE CLUSTER DUSTER HAS ARRIVED

Just to give you all an impression of what the front page of the CLUSTER DUSTER might look like, I have prepared this mock-up.

A number of articles have already arrived, but I am looking for lots more.

Some of the subjects you can expect to see are:

CLUSTER ROUND UP - reviews from the sysops of the activity on their clusters.
NETWORK NEWS - alterations and improvements to the system
SOFTWARE REVIEW - information on the latest software
TECHNICAL ARTICLES - buying, building or modifying equipment to meet your needs
GENERAL INTEREST ARTICLES - eg hints and tips, better operating procedures, RFI suppression, etc.
HUMOUR! - some of the clusters seem to be full of 'jokers'
LETTERS - moans and groans, your opinions on any cluster matters, controversial or otherwise.
FOR SALE or WANTED
CARTOONS - any budding cartoonists out there?

If anyone has any bright ideas do please send them along - everything will be considered.

FINALLY, If you've not yet sent in your subscription for THE CLUSTER DUSTER, please do so right now. Don't forget that one of the objects of the newsletter is to raise some cash to help to improve the network. The price has been kept down to £3.00 for four quarterly issues which, after duplicating and posting, will only realise, based on the most optimistic estimates, about 90p. for the network improvement. If you like what we are doing, you can always pay a little more as some subscribers have already done!

Articles and subscriptions should be sent to me (the Editor, G3XKD) at the address below (cheques made payable to the 'UK Cluster Working Group'), and after adding your name to the distribution list, the cheques will be sent on to the Treasurer of the Working Group (G4LJF).

Maurice King G3XKD, 15 Glebe Road, Prestbury, CHELTENHAM, Glos. GL52 3DG. Tel. (0242)231277

PRESS RELEASE

R.S.G.B. HF CONVENTION 1991

Provisional Programme

The Annual R.S.G.B. HF Convention will be held at the **Penguin Hotel, Daventry, Northants** on 28th/29th September, 1991.

As usual on the evening of Saturday 28th September, there will be a dinner for DX'ers with a well known speaker from the DX world. Overnight accommodation will be available in the hotel at a special rate.

On Sunday 29th September, there will be talks and events as follows:-

*	Martti Laine OH2BH	Dxpeditions (provisional)
*	Peter Hart G3SJX	Review of High Quality Transceivers
*	Al. Slater G3FXB	Contesting
*	Roger Western G3SXW	Pile Up Operating
*	John Allen, DTI Baldock	Whats on 80m tonight?
*	Roger Ballister G3KMA	IOTA
*	Packet Cluster Forum	
*	Young Amateur of the Year Award	
*	Presentation of RSGB HF Trophies	
*	Novice Clinic	

For further information please contact:

Bob Whelan G3PJT
36 Greenend,
Comberton
Cambridge
CB3 7DY

PROVISIONAL - Subject to Change Without Notice

CDXC DXPEDITION?

For a while now CDXC members seem to have been talking about mounting a DXpedition of sorts, but nothing concrete has come about (yet). There are a number of factors to decide upon first if we are to make this a reality. Some of them are:

1) Expense. Some of us are more able to afford a major DXpedition than others. It would be a shame to exclude some fine operators because our initial targets were set too high.

2) Experience. To carry off a major DXpedition requires organisation and experience of travel abroad. As a team, this is not necessarily available to us IN DEPTH. it would be better to mount a DXpedition this year that we could handle, learn from the experience and use it to aim at a bigger target next year.

3) Accessibility. Travel time should not be a major proportion of the total time available abroad because some of us would have limited holiday allocations available.

4) Rarity status. This depends on your point-of-view. Taking other factors (above) into account, it is unlikely that a Top-Ten DX country could seriously be considered, but something that is rare on a given award scheme or mode could be quite viable.

5) Timing. Timed to coincide with a major contest or not? The timing of the contest season does not necessarily agree with the cost limitations that apply!

I would therefore propose that we try to find a destination that is near a package tour destination and travel on from there for a limited distance by boat/plane.

One of the ideas I have is to activate J88 St.Vincent on CW. Access is easy and very cheap to the Eastern Caribbean. For the last two years I have flown and stayed in more than passable accommodation for TWO WEEKS for £319 and £349 respectively in Barbados, including insurance and airport taxes! In addition, I have good contacts on the island and it is civilised to the extent that any supplies (electrical, etc) can readily be purchased. Aircraft seats for the 1 hour flight to J88 are about £70, maybe less with a shared aircraft. Accommodation on St.Vincent is limited to a few guest houses and possibly a hotel. A secondary "expeditionary force" could be packed off to the Grenadines on the ferry boat at very low cost to mount an IOTA effort, leaving some still on J88 (St.V) if they didn't want to sample the beautiful Grenadines! Ideally a stop-off and rest period of about 3 days in 8P on the way out could be taken using the package tour hotel, and similarly on the way back. This would allow some to pick up 8P calls (I already have one!) and activate there too. Any XYLs and

YLs might like to stay on 8P and let their other halves carry on to St.V to play radios, while they get some sunbathing in!

So, what does everybody think? If you would like to travel to an interesting destination or have another suggestion of your own, please let's talk about it.

If CDXC is to make DXpeditions a reality, maybe a sub-committee can be formed to handle the different aspects involved in getting such an operation together? This would ease the burden placed on a particular individual.

Incidentally, I have a number of dodges to keep it CHEAP, especially on the insurance side, and would be pleased to give ad vice. June and July are especially good months for bargains, too. Group discounts are also available according to last year's brochure (over ten and one goes free).

Another suggestion was Aves island from G3LNS, requiring a stop in YV first, but licensing may be a problem. Maybe a challenge for a second DXpedition? Also, consider difficulties like inoculations, etc.

Regards, Paul, G4BKI

CDXC ARM

Roger, G3LQP, mentions the ARM elsewhere in this newsletter. We will aim to provide talk-in on 144.525 from about 1 hour beforehand. Please bring a garden chair, and keep fingers crossed regarding the weather! Light refreshments will be provided after the meeting. G3XTT's QTH is at NGR 703813 (OS sheet 175). Coming from the north, leave the M40 at the Watlington turn-off (B4009, Jn 5) , and follow signs towards Reading. In Rotherfield Peppard take first right after sharp bend, signposted Kidmore End and Woodcote. G3XTT is 100 yards beyond the cross-roads. From London, take M4, then A423(M), and go straight through Henley (signposted Peppard) until meeting B481. Turn south towards Reading and follow instructions as above on entering the village. From the West Country, exit M4 into Reading at Jn 11 (A33). Follow signs to Caversham, and then look for B481 to Peppard. Stay on B481 until you pass a Jet station on the left. Take next left. G3XTT is last house on left.. When close to G3XTT look out for the TH5! If lost, phone 0734 724192.

DX NETS AROUND THE WORLD

Highly apt given the recent controversy! OE2DYL's "DX Nets around the world", Issue 10, is now available. The price is $4 (US) airmail. Also available is "DX Beam Headings" (guess you need to give him your QTH to work these out). Cost is 25(US), no cheques. OE2DYL is Dieter Konrad, Rosengasse 1, A-5020 Salzburg, Austria. $1 (US) = 3 IRCs.

CY9CanadaFrance - St Paul Island Expedition October 1990

By Patrick Bittiger - FP5DX (F2DX)

(Translated by G3ZAY from the Clipperton DX Club Bulletin)

The North Atlantic is a hostile and dangerous region in October. We had spent over a year preparing for the expedition and in choosing the date we tried to balance the risks of poor propagation in summer against the increasingly bad weather during the autumn. We eventually managed to spend 6 days on St Paul Island instead of the 11 planned; making over 17,000 QSOs in 145 countries in four and a half days of operating.

The hardest task was discovering the right people to contact for all the various permits. VE1XT, a member of the 1988 expedition, helped us a lot with this work and also located a boat. Claude Dupupet, formerly the French honorary consul in Halifax liaised with the Canadian Coastguard and sent our voluminous file to Mr Parsons, the Controller of St Paul and Sable Is.

Two months before departure we had the landing permission, the licence, and a boat. Ron, FP/VE1KM, was negotiating with Air St Pierre for the transportation of equipment and I was looking for extra operators and sponsors. The Clipperton DX Club, through the good offices of its President, Paul - F6EXV - , gave assistance on the same scale as the Northern California DX Foundation (which has at least 20 times as many members). The "256 DX Group" (14.256 every evening) helped out (the first time they had sponsored an expedition) and, on our return, the Canadian DX Association joined in.

It was impossible to find a French, or even French speaking, operator despite an appeal in "Les Nouvelles DX" as most had already used up their annual leave. Our Canadian friends had the same problem and after VE1MQ had to withdraw, VO1MP - an excellent operator - made up the entire Canadian representation.

The team, consisting of FP5DX, FP/VE1KM, VO1MP, and Jean-Michel Bourdin (cameraman and chief cook), met at Sydney (Cape Breton Is) on October 18th to buy food, fuel for the generators, and gas for cooking and heating.

The largest items of equipment (over 1 ton in weight) were shipped from St Pierre et Miquelon to Halifax by plane, then by bus to Sydney, and finally by lorry to our port of departure. It goes without saying that the expedition began long before we saw St Paul.

We reached the small fishing port on the 19th after 4 hours on the road. Unfortunately a storm was on the way and the crossing planned for the 20th had to be cancelled. Our captain didn't conceal the fact that the forecast was bad and that the storm could last for up to 7 days. Our morale was very low! An 80m

dipole was set up about 5 feet above the ground and allowed us to pass the bad news (we even got through to Japan with it on 10 & 15 metres) to those who were waiting on our pre-announced frequencies.

At 6 a.m. on the 22nd we got the green light from the Coastguard. The boat was loaded in one hour and at last we were on the way. However, after three hours the wind got up, the sea became very rough and the motion of our trawler became quite nauseating. Two of us were sick and the whole group wondered if it would be possible to disembark at the island. One hour later we were looking at the 30m channel which divides the two tiny islands of St Paul and preparing the 2m wooden boat which would be used to disembark the equipment and the operators. "Enough's enough" we thought "we are here and we are going to get ashore". It took about twenty trips and was often quite dangerous as the trawler had to keep moving to avoid being swept onto the rocks by the current. It was about then we thought that "CF" had another meaning than "Canada France" - "Completely Foolish"!

We had only just reached the land when the wind turned. The channel became very difficult and by about one o'clock it was completely impassable. We discovered the next day that our courageous captain had suffered the worst storm of his nautical career on the return trip and that a petrol tanker had sunk in the Gulf of St Laurence.

The only occupants of the island, the lighthouse keepers, Paul and Paul, who we nicknamed the Prime Minister and King of this DXCC country, helped us move in to an old uninhabited house. By the same evening 4 antennas and a 30 foot tower were up in spite of the wind and we set the 3 element beam on Japan.

21.195 was dead, not a sound. Imagine my surprise when on asking if the frequency was occupied I was immediately called by JK1KRS, 59 on the S Meter, who told me to QSY because there were thousands of Japanese on the frequency waiting for CY9CF. It was with a rather emotional voice that I announced I was the one they were waiting for. The pleasure of operating banished any remaining tiredness; a huge pile-up, which I had never before had the pleasure of dealing with, had to be spread for more than 50 kHz before it was possible to pick out callsigns. Gus, VO1MP, programmed the memories of his electronic keyer before taking his turn for the pleasures of split operation. We all forgot to eat that night.

The following day was devoted to the erection of antennas (9 in all) and to compatibility tests with the various stations and amplifiers. It was unfortunately three days before Jean-Michel, our part-time sailor, could cross the channel to string the top-band dipole between the islands. The 40m vertical functioned

brilliantly when planted in the water but the second beam quickly turned into a wind-mill leaving only a multiband vertical for the second station. The high performance system we had planned for 80m and the Beverages for 160/80m were not set up because of the weather.

On the operating side things went well and propagation was good. We made a special effort on 10m because the previous expedition only made 4 QSOs on the band. We took part in CQWW SSB as a multi-multi not looking for a top place (not enough operators) but rather to give CY9 to the maximum number of stations and increase our QSO total. Unfortunately (again!), on the morning of Sunday the 28th after 6200 contest QSOs and with 12 hours still to go, "King Paul" brought us the news that a very bad storm was expected and if we didn't leave that day we might be stuck on the island for a week or two. It may help the reader to understand the situation to know that although the lighthouse keepers are usually relieved monthly by helicopter, the two present during our stay were already three weeks late getting off. There had simply been no suitable flying weather.

Faced with this catastrophe I returned to the French DX information net to work 15 stations who swore they had never contacted CY9 on any band (a subsequent check revealed that only 10 had been honest!). It was then a race against time. After 4 hours work our boat appeared on the horizon and with no time left to revisit the other island the top band dipole had to be left behind. One hour later everything had been loaded in a temperature of 5C. We took a last look at the island that one week earlier we'd never expected to see. The overnight crossing was trouble free but the expedition wasn't finished. Don't forget the 4 hour journey to Sydney, 7 hours by bus to Halifax, the ton of equipment to get through customs and ship home....

On my return to St Pierre I was invited to take part in an 80 minute programme on RFO Radio to discuss the CY9 trip. A television report is also being prepared. The 17,139 QSOs are stored in the Macintosh and the direct QSLs filed in order of arrival. We were receiving some 1500 each week and I would particularly like to thank those who, without prompting, included an additional IRC or a little "extra" to offset the expenses of the team. (Don't confuse the ordinary DX station or QSL manager with an expedition. The costs are not at all comparable.)

In conclusion we are happy with the expedition despite the fact that with one or two extra operators we would have been active around the clock and easily passed the target of 25,000 QSOs. I am happy with the number of French stations in the log. Many of you got a new country (even if you already had around 300) and thanked us for the operation. Despite the bad weather

nothing serious was broken. Despite a hectic and exhausting week we are happy to have lived the experience. I suggest that those armchair critics who complain whenever an expedition is not run the way they want should try it themselves!

I cannot finish without thanking: JK1KRS and his 10 strong team of JA1s for the printing of 4-colour QSL cards; VE1AOE, VO1AX, FP5HL, FP5CJ, and Bernard Pardeon for the loan of equipment; Messrs Parsons, Leclerc, and Dupupet for their understanding; Paul and Paul for their welcome on St Paul; and Les Ets Landry JVC de St Pierre (Apple agents) for the loan of a Macintosh portable, a generator, and a videocamera.

We are dedicating this expedition to the thousands of sailors who have lost their lives in shipwrecks around St Paul, and to our captain "Body" the only fisherman in the Bay of St Laurence mad enough to take us (and fetch us back) and without whom everything would have ended up in the sea.

STATISTICS

1. Band & Region Breakdown

BAND	W/VE	EU	JA	Other	TOTAL
1.8	442	21	0	5	468
3.5	1140	304	0	5	1449
7	1343	652	0	92	2087
10	34	28	0	0	62
14	2368	618	137	215	3338
18	277	212	141	1	631
21	934	1425	1019	244	3622
24	116	242	25	0	383
28	1778	2487	645	189	5099
TOTAL	8432	5989	1967	751	17139

2. The Most Contacted Countries (outside W/VE/JA)

ITALY	997 QSOs
GERMANY	797 QSOs
FRANCE	611 QSOs
UK	439 QSOs
SPAIN	314 QSOs
USSR (Eu)	265 QSOs
SWEDEN	255 QSOs
FINLAND	254 QSOs
HOLLAND	177 QSOs

(cont'd from p.2)

criticism. I know I'm by no means the only one to have a full and busy life and, in any case, DXing by its very nature is a time-consuming hobby. It simply means, I suspect, that CDXC needs to set its sights rather more modestly than I might have hoped. This needs to be borne in mind at the ARM when future plans are discussed. I do feel that the UK should try to emulate the Finns (OH2BH et al), the Norwegians (St.Peter Is, Bouvet), the French (7O, Clipperton, etc), the Germans (FH, S9, Conway Reef, etc) and so on in some way, though right now I'm not sure how. Perhaps the response to G4BKI's comments elsewhere in this newsletter about a possible CDXC DXpedition may give us a clue.

In any case, we desperately need new Committee members for the coming year. Of the present Committee, all but G0HSD will be standing down, having served for a number of years (Roger, G3LQP, has served CDXC tirelessly for longer than most of us can remember and deserves an especial vote of thanks). G4JVG, now in P29, is a little too far away to take part in Committee meetings. The work load need not be onerous and it would be nice to see members from areas other than the South East getting involved. During the past year we have held only 3 committee meetings, as much of the day to day work can be handled on the phone or via the Cluster system. So it would be not unreasonable to hold, say, one committee meeting in London, one at the HF Convention, and one in the north or the West Country. You will see from the list of current officers in this newsletter just which posts need to be filled. In addition there are several non-committee jobs such as awards manager, for which we always need volunteers.

Just one last point I wanted to make. Apparently there have been comments from some members that this newsletter doesn't represent very good value for £10 a year. To which I have to say great, you've noticed! Although the newsletter is a valuable means of keeping members in touch with one another (and costs more than the previous sub of £5/year to print and post), CDXC membership is about much more than this. If CDXC were only about the newsletter we may as well fold the group up. CDXC exists to promote DXing and other aspects of competitive HF amateur radio, including support for DXpeditions and so on. You need to look at how the funds are spent to get some idea of where the subscription goes but the newsletter is just one part of this.

CLUSTER USE

CDXC has been instrumental in promoting the introduction of PacketCluster to the UK and, as G4LJF reports elsewhere, Cluster use has grown enormously during the past 12 months. This has been

helped by big improvements in networking, which have relied on financial support from users and good coordination between the SYSOPS who are to commmended for the excellent job they do.

Unfortunately, the very success of PacketCluster could turn out to be its downfall. I am extremely distressed to see the way in which PacketCluster is becoming a soapbox for extreme and ill-judged comments to "ALL" in the way that the BBS network has been for some time now. Given that Cluster is open to all comers, I do believe that we should be temperate in the bulletins we put out, or risk bringing DXing in to disrepute with the amateur community at large. My main aim in supporting CDXC over the years, and as Chairman, has been to bring the DX community closer together and to help DXers unite around their common interest. Instead, I see DXers starting to snipe at each other and bring about divisions - those who love IOTA, those who hate it; those who tolerate lists and nets, those who decry them; those who think QRP is the only way to go, those who never turn off their Henry 5Ks. And so on. We will never all agree because we all have different interests and because there are no absolute answers, only personal opinions. But if UK DXers and contesters are to achieve any recognition in the world, they must learn to tolerate one another and work together for the common good. Use of emotive phrases, such as calling fellow DXers "cheats" doesn't help, and gives a very bad impression to those who log on casually to the system. In the extreme, SYSOPS would have to bar the ANNOUNCE and BULLETIN facilities. So let's cool it on the Cluster soap box before things get out of hand.

Don, G3XTT

(cont'd from p.3)

the Cluster system is not, in my opinion, the place, especially for the OTT remarks.

Personally I am not against nets when run correctly, having run the British Commonwealth Net for 5 years in the early 70s. OK, some folks don't share this view, but not everyone is blessed with a super QTH and antenna, and if guys in these positions can manage to work some rare DX via a net, then good luck I say.

A far more damaging effect is for a newcomer to amateur radio, a G8, G1 or G7, connected to the Cluster system, perhaps a future DXer, seeing these OTT remarkes coming from members of CDXC.

That's it for now. By the time you read this I'll be what you can describe as a BT pensioner, which should give more time for DXing. We'll see.

Don't forget about the Annual Review Meeting. Take care and good DXing.

Roger, G3LQP

Those were the days!

(advertisement from "The Wireless World", 1923)

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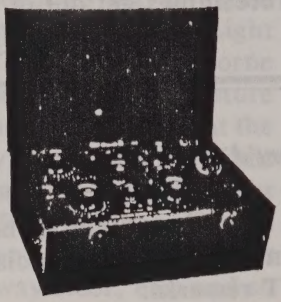
Complete Receiving Set for receiving on all Wavelengths up to and including 6,000 metres



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Contest News

G4BUO was kind enough to put the results of last year's World Radiosport Team Championship contest on the Cluster system. 944 logs were received, of which 762 made 5 or more QSOs with /WG stations and therefore receive a certificate. The top 500 stations also receive a T-shirt. The leading single-op was N2IC/0 with 3.1M points, leading multi-single was K8AZ with 3.36M. HA0DU was the leading EU station, placed sixth overall in the single-op category with 1.8M points. Support was strong from eastern Europe, whereas many G stations assumed the contest was timed for Saturday, not Friday night, and therefore missed the contest!

G3SXW was top G behind 39 other EU single-ops. Below are listed all the G's who entered, with their overall placing and an indication of whether they will get a T-shirt and/or a certificate.

236	G3SXW	302511	C	T
238	G3ZAY	302094	C	T
481	G4BKI	74800	C	T
572	GW0ARK	38736		
584	G4IFB	36148		
593	G0MFO	34521	C	
658	G4BUE	19600	C	